

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 01365 111914Z

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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AMEMBASSY SAIGON

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ICRC, PARN, VS, VN, PFOR

SUBJECT: LOW CONFERENCE VOTING ON PRG ISSUE

REF: GENEVA 783

SUMMARY: US INTERESTS ON ASEAN ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES MAY BE BETTER SERVED BY MAKING REPRESENTATIONS INITIALLY AT DELEGATION LEVEL, RESERVING DEMARCHE TO MEA FOR SITUATIONS WHERE HOSTILE DELEGATION POSITION REQUIRES EFFORT TO SEEK REVERSAL. END SUMMARY.

1. INITIAL CLARK ATTITUDE TOWARD PRG ISSUE (REFTEL) WAS IN KEEPING WITH TRADITIONAL FMG POLICY OF NEUTRALITY ON ASEAN QUESTIONS. EARLY CONTACTS WITH MEA DIRECTOR INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT CERTAINLY INDICATED THAT THIS WOULD BE THE CASE.

2. WHILE EMBASSY IS UNABLE TO ASSESS IMPACT OF PRG DEMARCHE TO NIGERIAN MISSIONS ABROAD ON FINAL POSITION TAKEN BY FMG, SUPPORT OF CHALLENGE TO CHAIRMAN'S RULING
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PAGE 02 LAGOS 01365 111914Z

DOES SUGGEST POSSIBILITY THAT EARLY US APPROACH MAY HAVE BEEN COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. AT TIME OF FIRST

REPRESENTATION MEA, NOT ANTICIPATING RESURGENCE OF PROBLEM, APPEARED PREPARED TO ACCEPT DECISION OF FIRST SESSION OF LOW AND PRG. US APPROACH ON POSSIBLE RECURRENCE OF PRG INVITATION ISSUE MAY HAVE PROBMPTED MEA DECISION TO TAKE SECOND LOOK AT QUESTION RATHER THAN ISSUE GENERALIZED INSTRUCTIONS WITH NET EFFECT OF PRODUCING NIGERIAN ABSTENTION. IMPLICATIONS OF US POINTS WERE THEREFORE STUDIED AND THIS LED MEA TO QUERY WHETHER SECOND SESSION WAS IN FACT A CONTINUATION OF CONFERENCE. COUPLED, NO DOUBT, WITH REPRESENTATIONS BY PRG, MATTER REQUIRED HIGHER LEVEL DECISION ON BOTH SUBSTANTATIVE AND PROCEDURAL ASPECTS OF QUESTION AND THUS PUT INTO DOUBT ALMOST AUTOMATIC REACTION THAT NIGERIA SHOULD ABSTAIN. ADENIJI'S EXPLANATIONS TO EMBOFF (LAGOS 1059) WOULD TEND TO CONFIRM THIS VIEW. THEY ALSO SUGGEST UPPER ECHELON (PRESUMABLY PERMSEC) WAS PREPARED TO BE SWAYED BY ARGUMENT THAT SUPPORT OF ALGERIAN INVITATION RESOLUTION IN NO WAY IMPLIED PRG RECOGNITION AND DID NOT VIOLATE TRADITIONAL NIGERIAN POSITIONS ON SUCH MATTERS -- BEING SIMILAR TO INVITATIONS TO AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS WHERE THE FMG HAS NOT ALWAYS RECOGNIZED "ENTITIES" AS GOVERNMENTS BUT HAS SIMPLY CONTENTED THAT ALL VIEWS SHOULD BE HEARD. THUS IT IS POSSIBLE THAT US MAY HAVE WEAKENED ITS CASE IN LAGOS BY DRAWING EARLY ATTENTION TO PRG ISSUE IN LOW CONFERENCE.

3. WHILE US CANNOT HOPE FOR MORE THAN ABSTENTION ON MOST ASEAN MATTERS, EMBASSY HAS NEVERTHELESS MAINTAINED A CONTINUING DIALOGUE WITH MEA SO THAT FMG IS FULLY AWARE OF STRENGTH OF US FEELING ON THESE ISSUES. AS IN CASE OF LOW CONFERENCE, HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN EVIDENCE THAT EXTRA US EFFORT MAY HAVE CAUSED UPPER ECHELON DECISIONS DETRIMENTAL TO OUR INTERESTS, WHILE CONTACTS AT DELEGATION LEVEL APPEARED TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING. THIS SUGGESTS THAT, AT TIMES, REPRESENTATIONS MAY BE BETTER HANDLED BY US DELEGATION AT PARTICULAR CONFERENCE WHERE GIVE-AND-TAKE IN NEGOTIATIONS PROVIDE GREATER LEVERAGE FOR US THAN
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PAGE 03 LAGOS 01365 111914Z

APPROACH IN CAPITAL. BOTH DELEGATIONS ARE ON THE SPOT, ACCESSIBLE, AND AWARE OF BEHIND THE SCENES MANEUVERS. IN ADDITION, DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY (AND SOMETIMES ABSENCE OF INSTRUCTIONS) OF HEAD OF NIGERIAN DELEGATION ENABLES GREATER FLEXIBILITY (WITHIN CERTAIN LIMITS) AND ABILITY TO MAKE DECISIONS WITHOUT REFERRAL TO LAGOS. ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS, EMBASSY DEMARCHE HAS BEEN MEA'S FIRST SOURCE OF NEWS REGARDING EVENTS AT AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AND, IN THIS AS IN OTHER CASES, SEEMINGLY

LED TO ADOPTION OF POSITION CONTRARY TO THAT SOUGHT.

4. CONTINUED DISCUSSION WITH MEA OFFICIALS IS
NECESSARY AND MAY ULTIMATELY RESULT IN MORE FAVORABLE
ATTITUDES TOWARD U.S. POSITIONS ON ASEAN QUESTIONS.
NEVERTHELESS, FOR TIME BEING, EMBASSY BELIEVES US
INTERESTS BETTER SERVED IF INITIAL APPROACHES ON A
PARTICULAR ASPECT OF PROBLEM (AS IN CASE PRG) ARE
MADE AT DELEGATION LEVEL WHERE THEY MORE LIKELY MEET
WITH SUCCESS, RESERVING DEMARCHE TO MEA FOR
SITUATIONS WHERE DELEGATION TAKES HOSTILE
POSITION AND ATTEMPT SECURE REVERSAL FROM MEA IS
ONLY REMAINING HOPE.

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